

PIPE SPRING NATIONAL MONUMENT (PISP)

Size 16 hectares (40 acres)

Park Purpose and History Geologic processes produced these desert springs and made the site a focus for wildlife, and a centuries-long continuum of human habitation. The springs were well known to Ancestral Puebloan people and bands of Southern Paiutes long before the arrival of Mormon missionaries in 1858. Following the ill-fated homesteading efforts of James Whitmore, in 1870 the Mormon Church established a tithing ranch and constructed a fort (Winsor Castle) for protection from Indians.

Besides the business of ranching, Pipe Spring became an outpost for another church venture—the Deseret Telegraph. A spur line was established through Pipe Spring in 1871, creating the first telegraph station in the Arizona Territory. In 1909, the Kaibab Paiute Indian Reservation was established and surrounded Pipe Spring. But ranch buildings, springs, and grounds immediately around the springs remained in private ownership until transfer to the NPS in 1923.

Pipe Spring National Monument was established by President Warren G. Harding's proclamation No. 1663 (43 Stat. 1913) of May 31, 1923, “Whereas, it appears that the public good would be promoted by reserving the land on which Pipe Spring and the early dwelling place are located as a National Monument, with as much land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof, to serve as a memorial of western pioneer life...”

The 1923 proclamation further addresses the spring water by clarifying that the availability of water at the site was one reason for its establishment as a monument, stating, “Whereas, there is in northwestern Arizona on the road between Zion National Park and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon National Park a spring, known as Pipe Spring, which affords the only water along the road between Hurricane, Utah, and Fredonia, Arizona, a distance of sixty-two miles...”

It also declares that, “in the administration of this Monument, the Indians of the Kaibab Reservation, shall have the privilege of utilizing waters from Pipe Spring for irrigation, stock watering and other purposes, under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior.” Although the proclamation does not speak to any other third party use of water, it does state that monument establishment is “subject to all prior valid claims.”

Throughout the early years, descendants and associates of former ranch owners were allowed to continue using water for livestock. Through those same years, the Indian Agent for the Kaibab Paiute Tribe pointed out that the Tribe's use was precluded or made extremely difficult. As a result of disagreement between the cattlemen, the Indian Agent, and the monument custodian, in 1933, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Oscar L. Chapman, signed a document titled “Regulations For The Division Of The Waters Of Pipe Springs” that states, “The waters of the Springs shall be divided equally, one-third to the Pipe Springs National Monument, one-third to the Indians of the Kaibab Indian Reservation, and one-third to the stockmen represented by a memorandum agreement signed June 9, 1924, by representatives of the respective interests.”

In 1933, the flow of Tunnel Spring roughly approximated one-fifth of the total flow of all springs. As this presumably met the cattlemen's needs and as a matter of engineering convenience, the totality of Tunnel Spring flow was diverted to the cattlemen. After many years of discontent over water delivery to the Tribe, the National Park Service and Tribe entered into an agreement in 1972 whereby, in exchange for the Tribe's one-third of the spring flow, the NPS built and agreed to maintain a culinary water well and delivery system on reservation lands north of the Monument. The NPS pays the Tribe for its use of water from this system. This twenty-five year agreement expired in 1997. A rewritten agreement has been mutually drafted, but is yet to be effectuated. In the interim, the old agreement has been mutually renewed in three month increments.

From the Long Range Interpretive Plan (NPS 2000) and the most recent Statement for Management (NPS 1995b), the Mission and Purpose of Pipe Spring National Monument is:

Mission

The mission is to

- protect the natural and cultural resources in an unimpaired state for the enjoyment of the public,
- increase knowledge and understanding of, and convey the compelling stories of pioneer and American Indian culture, history, and relationships to the natural environment, and,
- protect the water of the springs to the greatest degree possible, yet allowing use as entitled by law.

Purpose

The purpose is to

- serve as a memorial of Western pioneer life, Kaibab Paiute culture, and interactions between Euro-American and Indian cultures,
- preserve and protect the springs and associated natural environment,
- preserve, protect, and develop a better understanding of the cultural significance and resources present at the site, and,
- provide opportunities for visitors to experience, understand, and enjoy the site.

Location A 16 hectare (40 acre) historic site in the northeast part of Mohave County, Arizona, 16 kilometers (10 miles) south of the Arizona-Utah border, and entirely surrounded by the Kaibab-Paiute Indian Reservation. Primary access provided by Arizona State Highway 389.

Elevation Elevations range from 1500 meters (4923 feet) to 1555 meters (5100 feet).

General Description On the Moccasin Terrace of the Markagunt Plateau at the southern sloping base of the Vermilion Cliffs. From this site, a dry plain slopes southward for 48 kilometers (30 miles) before descending into Grand Canyon.

Culturally introduced plant materials include a variety of shade trees (ash, cottonwood, poplar, elm, locust, ailanthus), fruit trees, a grape arbor, and a vegetable garden.

Temperatures highs range in the summer from 90 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit; in the winter, normal low temperatures range between 0 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

There are three springs, the main spring (Pipe Spring), emerging from beneath the fort itself, Tunnel Spring (located just southwest of the fort), and West Cabin spring (a seep spring once called the “calf-pasture spring”). The springs are fed by the Navajo Sandstone aquifer to the north and west, via the Sevier Fault. Only one spring, West Cabin, flows naturally, creating a very small riparian area (1/8 acre).

PISP also contains paleontological resources: three tridactyl dinosaur footprints, tentatively identified as *Eubrontes*. (Cuffey et al. 1998)

Unique Features and and Species of Special Concern

The most unique/important/critical natural (and cultural) resource is water. Prehistoric and historic American Indian people have used the spring waters for thousands of years. In the 1860s, the springs were claimed by Mormon pioneers and used for settlement and ranching purposes until 1923 when Pipe Spring was proclaimed a national monument and the ranch purchased.

As of the second week of June, 1999, the historic spring ceased to flow for the first time on record. This spring, located directly beneath the north building of Winsor Castle is divided into two flows—one which proceeds through a historic subsurface trench to an emergence point outside the Castle’s west gate, known as Big Spring, and a second flow which is piped beneath the Castle courtyard into and through the Castle’s Spring Room. The runoff from both Big Spring and the Spring Room feed historic masonry ponds immediately south of the Castle. Spring flow is critical to the historic integrity, and provides life-giving sustenance to acres of shade trees, a representative historic orchard, and wildlife.

As one of few perennial water sources on the Arizona Strip, the springs provide a vital resource for resident bird populations and are also vital to migrating bird populations. A bird inventory has been completed.

Water is important for all local fauna. Reptiles and small rodents are particularly abundant, as are bats. Complete inventories do not exist for any animal species.

The climate is fairly temperate, and the plant and animal species are typically semi-desert. North of PISP is pinyon-juniper woodland. Intermingled with and at the edge of this woodland community is a sagebrush grassland with sagebrush dominant on the more level areas of ground and pinyon-juniper occurring on the shallow rocky soils and broken country of adjacent higher elevations. Other on-site vegetation includes rabbitbrush, prickly pear cactus and sagebrush. Nearly half PISP contains the aforementioned semi-desert plant species. Animal species include small rodents, reptiles, birds, bats, amphibians, and coyotes.

Resource Management Concerns

While the main thrust is human history, there would be no human history here were it not for the natural resources. PISP has been an oasis and is critically important to wildlife, as well as migratory animals. With the exception of the bird study, a 70% complete plant survey, and an aquatic invertebrates survey, no other survey data exists for the floral or faunal resources.

An important part of the story is the grazing lands (as well as the water) that attracted Euro-American pioneers to the Arizona Strip. Stories abound regarding “grass belly high to a horse.” Overgrazing reduced the range to dust by the 1890s, and what has managed to recover is mostly sage-salt bush desert scrub. A future resource management interpretation project will attempt to reseed with native grasses.

Exotic plant species such as puncture vine, cheat grass, alanthus, and Siberian elm trees are of concern. However, trees, along with silver-leafed cottonwoods, none of which are native, provide the only shade. Most trees were planted by the NPS. Efforts should be made to eliminate exotics, however, many shade trees in public areas will be retained.